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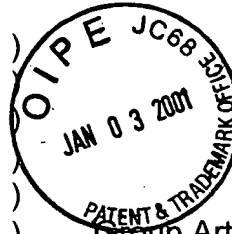
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Continuation of PCT Application
of PCT/JP00/05410

Yasuo KOBAYASHI et al.

Serial No.: 09/667,768

Filed: September 22, 2000



Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned

Examiner: Not Yet Assigned

For: PROCESSING APPARATUS AND PROCESSING METHOD

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b)

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56 and 1.97(b), applicants bring to the Examiner's attention the documents listed on attached Form PTO-1449. Copies of the listed documents are attached. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the documents listed on attached Form PTO-1449 and indicate that they were considered by making an appropriate notation on this form.

This Information Disclosure Statement is being filed before the mailing date of a first Office Action on the merits for the above-referenced application.

The following are listed on the accompanying PTO-1449 and are in a non-English language:

1. Japanese Patent Application No. 10-335316
2. Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-208498
3. Japanese Patent Application No. 11-54496
4. Japanese Patent Application No. 4-32230

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5. Japanese Patent Application No. 6-349791

In lieu of a statement of relevance or translation of the listed non-English language documents, an English-language abstract of the documents setting forth the relevance is enclosed.

This submission does not represent that a search has been made or that no better art exists and does not constitute an admission that each or all of the listed documents are material or constitute "prior art." If the Examiner applies any of the documents as prior art against any claim in the application and applicants determine that the cited documents do not constitute "prior art" under United States law, applicants reserve the right to present to the office the relevant facts and law regarding the appropriate status of such documents.

Applicants further reserve the right to take appropriate action to establish the patentability of the disclosed invention over the listed documents, should one or more of the documents be applied against the claims of the present application.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Statement, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: David W. Hill
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Dated: January 3, 2001
Enclosures
DWH/FPD/sci

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